

LEDJURY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

FOR THE YEAR

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1946.

STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

Medical Officer of Health:

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County Offices,  
Alton Street,  
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Sanitary Inspector, Sanitary Surveyor & Housing  
Designated Officer:

+ F.J. EAST, M.I.Mun.E., A.R.S.I.

+ Holds Sanitary Inspector's Certificate.

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The Deanery,  
Ledbury.

COUNTY OFFICES,

ALTON STREET,

ROSS-ON-WYLL.

21st August, 1947.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1946, which is in accordance with Circular 13/47, of the Ministry of Health.

The Report deals generally with the public health service provided by the Council and contains no special emphasis upon any particular aspect of the work of the Department.

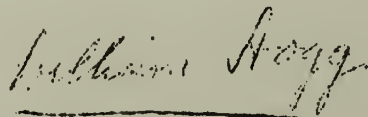
The health of the population of the District was good throughout the year, indeed so good that it is unlikely to be maintained for a long period, however much this is desired.

I should like to acknowledge the support which the Council has given me in the discharge of my duties during the year and to express my appreciation of this confidence.

The Report could not be published without the assistance of my colleagues and I have to acknowledge help most willingly give by Mr. H.W. Orme, Clerk to the Council, Mr. F. East, Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor, Mr. A.T. Thomas, Financial Officer and Mr. K.G. Mills, Rating Officer.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen

Your obedient Servant,



Medical Officer of Health.

# SECTION A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA:-

The Urban District of Ledbury forms a small country town in the southeastern portion of the County of Hereford on the approaches to the Malvern Hills. It forms a centre for the adjacent rural area which is an important hop and fruit growing district. The town is ancient and has preserved much of its old world atmosphere and is a summer holiday resort.

The River Leddon, a tributary of the River Severn, forms part of the boundary of the town. At Ledbury, it is normally a small shallow stream and of no particular value as a fishing river.

The town is situated on the main line of the Great Western Railway and is a junction for the Newent and Gloucester line.

Area (in acres) ... ..	499
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1946) ... ..	974
Rateable Value ... ..	£18,431
Sum Represented by a Penny Rate ... ..	£72.19.0.
Registrar General's Estimated Resident Population ... ..	3,404

## Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year:-

Live Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population ... 23.8

Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 Total Births (Live & Still) ... 24.1

Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population (crude). 16.7

## Deaths from Puerperal Causes : -

			<u>Rate per 1,000</u>	
			<u>Deaths.</u>	<u>Total Births</u>
Heading No. 29 ...	Puerperal Cases	NIL		NIL
Heading No. 30. ...	Other Puerperal Causes.	NIL		NIL

## Death Rate of Infants under One Year of Age:-

All Infants per 1,000 Live Births ... 61.7

Legitimate Infants per 1,000 Legitimate Live Births ... 77.0

Illegitimate Infants per 1,000 Illegitimate Live Births ... NIL

## Population:-

The Registrar General's estimate of the resident population is 3,404 which compares with a figure of 3,321 for the previous year, and 3,284 for the 1931 census. The estimated average number of persons per acre is 6.8 and the average number of persons per inhabited house is 3.5. The average number of inhabited houses per acre is 1.9. The natural increase of the population i.e. the excess of births over deaths for the year was 24. If the war years are excluded, the population has shown little tendency to variation during recent years.

## Births:-

A total of 81 live births (47 males and 34 females) were registered, giving a birth rate of 23.8 per thousand of the estimated resident population, compared with 19.1 for England and Wales.



Stillbirths:-

There were 12 stillbirths registered, which gives a rate of 0.6 per thousand of the estimated resident population.

Deaths:-

The actual number of deaths recorded as having occurred within the Urban District is 57, after deduction of deaths of non-residents and the addition of deaths of residents which occurred outside the District. This gives a crude death rate of 16.7. A Table of Causes of Death according to sex is given at the end of this Report.

Infant Mortality:-

There were 5 deaths of infants under one year of age, giving an infantile mortality rate of 61.7 per thousand live births.

Cancer Deaths:-

There were 6 deaths attributed to all forms of cancer. Of these, four related to female deaths and two to male deaths.

Cancer Death Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population ... 1.9  
Deaths from Diarrhoea:-

There were no deaths due to diarrhoea in children under the age of two years.

SECTION B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES OF THE AREA:-

The Public Health Laboratory at the County Offices, Hereford, a unit of the Public Health Laboratory Service, under the direction of Dr. R. Lwart Jones, continued to provide clinical laboratory facilities for the area. There can be no doubt that this service is of the greatest value to the inhabitants of the district and to the Public Health Department. The control of bacterial diseases becomes more elaborate each year and would be impossible without modern laboratory facilities.

The following table shows the number and type of examinations carried out by the laboratory:-

Specimens Examined.

Swabs	...	...	...	...	...	5
Sputum	...	...	...	...	...	6
Urine	...	...	...	...	...	2
Water - Bacteriological	...	...	...	...	...	7
Water - Chemical	...	...	...	...	...	3

It must be remembered that investigations are also carried out at the request of medical practitioner's in the area. These investigations are not included in the above table.

Hospital Facilities.-

The Ledbury Cottage Hospital, is a voluntary hospital with X-ray apparatus and surgical theatre, and it provides accommodation for medical and surgical cases.

The Council has accommodation for cases of notifiable disease at the Stretton Sugwas Hospital belonging to the Hereford Rural District Council. The shortage of nursing and domestic staff prevalent during the year somewhat limited the admissions to hospital. This shortage of staff was the local effect of a nation wide shortage, but fortunately had no serious influence upon the health of the inhabitants.

Ambulance Facilities:-

A motor ambulance is maintained in Ledbury, by the Home Ambulance Service Joint Committee of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society. The officer in charge is Mr. W. Allen, Hemend, Tel. 463.

Patients suffering from infectious disease are conveyed in the ambulance of the Hereford Rural District Council stationed at the Stretton Sugwas Hospital.

Open cases of tuberculosis are conveyed in the County Council ambulance stationed at Nicuport Sanatorium.

Public Mortuary:-

There is no public mortuary provided for the area, although mortuaries exist at the Ledbury Cottage Hospital and at Belle Orchard House. The somewhat inadequate facilities for post mortem examinations has been brought to the notice of the Council and preliminary discussions with the Ledbury Rural Council for the provision of more adequate facilities were opened in 1939. As a result of the coming into force of the National Health Service Act 1946; no further progress has been possible as the position resulting from the application of the Act is not yet clear.

SECTION C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA:-Water:-

The town is supplied chiefly by means of the Council's piped supply, although there are still over 100 private shallow wells in use as domestic supplies. In 1938/39 a survey of these wells was completed and showed that in many instances the water was not fit for potable purposes. The continued use of shallow wells of doubtful quality is not likely to promote the health of the inhabitants and should be remedied at an early date. It is appreciated that the present general shortages is hardly appropriate for any extensive action.

The Council's mains are divided into two systems, the high pressure system supplying the higher part of the town and the low pressure system which supplies the remainder, but there are facilities for connecting the high pressure to the low pressure system.

The water normally supplying the low pressure mains is derived from the Conygree Reservoir (100,000 gallons capacity), this being fed from springs which origin in what appears to be Wenlock Limestone in Conygree Wood. These springs are land springs with a yield subject to variations related to the local rainfall. The Brickyard Well is one of the most important of these. The water is chlorinated in the reservoir and supplies water by gravitation. There is no pumping plant provided and this supply requires augmentation from the high pressure supply during the summer months of low rainfall.

The high pressure system depends upon the reservoir (75,000 gallons) situated at Cross Hands and which is fed by pumping water from Massington Wells situated in a depression in Eastnor Parish. An automatic chlorinator is driven from the crankshaft of the pumps. During dry weather some lowering of the rest level in the well is observed.

As the existing sources of supply had been for some time inadequate for the needs of the District, the Council in 1942 was able to arrange with the Malvern Urban District Council for a supply from the Bromsberrow pumping station of that Authority. This supply is brought from Hollybush by a 3" main through the Parish of Eastnor to the H.P. reservoir at Massington. The Bromsberrow supply is derived from borcholes in the New Red Sandstone.



Chlorination of the Council's supplies has been continuous since 1942, and has resulted in the water being rendered sterile as shown on bacteriological examination. Samples are examined from time to time of the chlorinated water but owing to engineering circumstances it is not possible to sample water before chlorination except at the massington Wells. However, previous to the installation of chlorination, tests showed that the untreated water did give a small bacterial count. Chlorination has no harmful effect upon health and is a valuable protection against water borne disease. If properly carried out, the discontinuance of this safeguard is not to be recommended.

In 1944, the Malvern main was extended to Upperfields with the purpose of improving pressure in the higher portion of the town, and it can now be stated that the piped supply is usually adequate in quantity in the higher parts of the area.

In spite of the extension of the Malvern main in Upperfields the quantity of water seems to be adequate but inadequate pressure causes difficulty in parts of the area at times.

During the year, 250 yards of 3" water main were constructed to supply 27 new dwellings now being erected on the Council's Longacre Estate. There are now 736 dwellings supplied by separate services from the mains and 26 standpipes on the mains provide water for a further 97 houses.

The quality of the water supplied by the mains is satisfactory for drinking purposes and so long as chlorination is continued it can be regarded as a water of good potable quality.

It appears to have no appreciable action upon lead, probably as a result of the amount of hardness present. During the year, four samples of the water from the mains were submitted for bacteriological examination and one sample was sent for chemical examination. All samples were reported as being suitable for potable purposes.

Two private shallow wells used for the supply of individual dwellings were sampled and both chemical and bacteriological samples showed the water to be unsuitable as a source of potable water.

I am indebted to Mr. East, Engineer, Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector for the following excellent account of the problem and the action taken to remedy it.

During the year, the pressure in the watermains was found to be insufficient to give a constant supply of water to some of the houses in the higher parts of the town.

The parts of the district affected were in Bank Crescent and near the railway bridges in Woodleigh Road and Bridge Street. The position in Bank Crescent is made worse when water is being drawn to fill the swimming baths.

To meet these difficulties a scheme was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Health, the main outlines of which are as under:

1. A short length of main to be laid in Knapp Lane to connect the existing supply main from Hollybush with the main in Knapp Lane to enable the swimming baths to be filled from the Hollybush supply.
2. The provision of a bypass at the junction of Bank Crescent and Homend Crescent and an additional valve near the Grammar School entrance, to enable Bank Crescent to be supplied from the Hollybush main.
3. A main laid under the railway at Bridge Street to connect the mains on either side of the bridge.
4. A main to be laid over the Woodleigh Road railway bridge.

The scheme also includes a short extension of the main in



Newbury Park and an extension on the Longacre Housing site.

This scheme has been approved by the Ministry of Health and work will commence shortly.

In addition to the supply given within the Urban area, a small number of dwellings and business premises in the adjacent Rural area are connected to the Council's mains

#### Drainage and Sewerage:-

During the year, no extensions of either public or private sewers were made. The town has a system of public sewers which takes the drainage of almost the whole of the town. As Ledbury is a very old town the exact course and the present condition of some of these sewers is rather a matter for conjecture, but the system works with reasonable efficiency.

The disposal of the sewage leaves much to be desired. The disposal works consist of crude settlement tanks and irrigation over land, the effluent being subsequently passed into the River Leadon. The quality of this effluent shows that the disposal works are inadequate for the load and the river water at times becomes badly deoxygenated.

There can be no doubt that the Council's scheme for an entirely new works is very necessary and it is unfortunate that no further progress has been made.

One new drain, constructed in connection with a dwelling house, was tested and found to be satisfactory.

#### Public Conveniences:-

Public conveniences are provided in the centre of the town by the Council. These are well sited and maintained in a good state with some difficulty. Damage and mutilation of the premises is a problem of some significance. Eighteen inspections of these premises were made during the year.

#### Rivers and Streams:-

The River Leadon, a small tributary of the River Severn, forms part of the western boundary of the Urban District. The land adjacent to this River is subject to flooding during the winter months, at times these floods involve the land used for irrigation at the sewage disposal works. During the year, the course of the River was cleared by the responsible Authority with an improvement in flow.

Proposals for a new sewage disposal works have been submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval. New works would secure a further improvement in the River.

#### Closet Accommodation:-

About half of the dwellings in the town are provided with efficient water closets, the remaining dwellings being provided with slop closets. These are not entirely adequate and conversion is one of the tasks of the future. No conversions were carried out during the year.

#### Public Cleansing:-

There is a weekly collection of domestic refuse in operation throughout the district. Collection is made by means of an open lorry. This vehicle was acquired as a temporary measure, and its use leaves much to be desired. I am pleased to report that the Council decided to dispense with it and acquire a new vehicle properly constructed for the collection of refuse.

The Council does not undertake the collection of trade refuse.

Disposal of refuse is carried out by crude tipping, the tip

being placed on flat ground adjacent to Jubilee Meadow. Lack of covering material prevents controlled tipping being carried out, but the system is fairly satisfactory.

The Council does not undertake the cleansing of privies and cesspools. Street cleansing is continuous, one man being permanently engaged in this work with additional help when required. All roads are cleansed including trunk roads and the cleansing is quite adequate.

#### Swimming Baths:-

The small open air swimming bath in Hereford Road, owned by the Council, was open to the public during the summer months. The bath water is taken from the town mains and the bath is emptied and refilled once weekly. No purification plant is provided but hand treatment of the water with Chloros is carried out to maintain the water in a clean state. One sample of the water taken in the mid week period was examined bacteriologically. The result was fairly satisfactorily for a bath of this type.

#### Sanitary Inspection of the Area:-

I am indebted to Mr. F.J. East, Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor, for the following tabular statement furnished under Article 27(18) of the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations, 1935:-

#### Inspections:-

Farms and Dairies	...	...	...	...	1
Factories (with mechanical power)	...	...	...	...	2
Housing Consolidated Regulations...	...	...	...	...	17
Housing	...	...	...	...	17
Public Conveniences	...	...	...	...	18
Rats and Lice	...	...	...	...	4
Unsound Food	...	...	...	...	8
Water Supply	...	...	...	...	2
Total					<u>69</u>

#### Notices Issued:-

Informal	...	...	...	...	15
Statutory re Housing	...	...	...	...	6
Statutory (other Acts)	...	...	...	...	2

#### Summary of Defects Remedied:-

A nuisance was abated in a cinema, a tavern and in seven dwellings.

In the middle of the year, Mr. Parks resigned his appointment to take up duties with another Local Authority in Wiltshire and was succeeded by Mr. F.J. East, who thus held office for only part of the year.

Shortly after taking up his duties, Mr. East had to vacate the office in Worcester Road, rented by the Council and was accommodated in a room at St. Catherine's. This accommodation is not very suitable in its present condition.

#### Shops and Offices:-

No action was taken in connection with these premises during the year under the Shops Act, 1934, or under the Public Health Act, 1936.



Camping Sites:-

There were no sites used for camping purposes during the year and no licences for camping sites were granted by the Local Authority.

Eradication of Bed Bugs:-

No infestations of dwellings with bed bugs came to the notice of the Department during the year. No system of disinfection of the belongings of tenants before removal to Council houses is in operation. No disinfections were carried out by the Council's staff.

Factories Act, 1937:-

Two factories with mechanical power were inspected during the year, and two informal notices to provide sanitary accommodation were served and the necessary work was completed.

A new Register of these premises is in preparation.

SECTION D. HOUSING:-

Like every other Local Authority, the Council was faced with an urgent need for additional houses, and the development of the Long Acre Estate was pressed forward with the maximum speed possible in the circumstances. Progress was slow, but this was a general defect resulting from the abnormal conditions.

At the end of the year, 27 dwellings were in course of erection for the Local Authority, none were completed during the year. Private owners commenced the erection of 7 dwellings, and of these 3 were completed before the 31st December.

Inspection of Dwelling-Houses during the year:-

1(a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	17
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	24
2(a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-heading (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932	...	17
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	...	24
3.	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation.	...	NIL
4	Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	16

Remedy of Defects during the year without service of Formal Notices:-

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers.	...	3
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Action under Statutory Powers during the year:-

(a)	Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
1	Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs.	... NIL



2 Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:-

(a) By owners ... .. NIL

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... NIL

(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:-

1 Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... .. 8

2 Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:- ...

(a) By owners ... .. 4

(b) By Local Authority in default of owners ... NIL

(c) Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:-

1 Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... NIL

2 Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... NIL

(d) Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:-

1 Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... NIL

2 Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ... NIL

Housing Act, 1936. - Part IV - Overcrowding:-

(a) 1 Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year ... 41

2 Number of families dwelling therein ... 63

3 Number of persons dwelling therein ... 288

(b) Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year ... NIL

(c) 1 Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year ... 1

2 Number of persons concerned in such cases ... 8

(d) Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding ... NIL

SECTION E. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD:-

Milk Supply:-

There were eight Registrations, under the Milk and Dairies Order, 1926, of retail milk purveyors at the end of 1945. No wholesale purveyors are Registered. As the existing Register is very old, and there is reason to believe that it is not entirely accurate, a new revised Register is in course of preparation.

No samples of milk were submitted by the Department during the year, and the water supply of the Registered premises is at present under

review.

There are no pasteurisation plants in operation and no licences for the sale of pasteurised milk were issued by the Local Authority.

One informal notice was served upon an occupier for the lime-washing of walls and the removal of manure, and the work required was carried out.

#### Ice-Cream:-

During the year, the sale of ice-cream commenced after a relatively long absence due to war time restrictions. The sale of the prepared product seems to be the only phase carried on at present, no manufacture taking place within the District. A new Register of premises for manufacture, sale and storage of ice-cream was therefore commenced and at the time of writing is not yet completed.

#### Water Cress:-

Although the sale of this food did take place no special action was necessary by the Department.

#### Shell Fish:-

The sale of shell fish is lower compared with pre-war years, and no action was necessary by the Department.

#### Food found to be unfit for human consumption:-

The following foodstuffs were seized or voluntarily surrendered during the year:-

252 lbs. fish	3 tins peas.
9 lbs. brawn	30 tins milk
22 lbs. bacon	2 tins fish
53 pork pies	4 tins tomatoes
2 jars pickles	1 tin meat
8 tins beans	4 tins Irish stew.

No notifications of food poisoning or suspected food poisoning were received during the year.

#### SECTION F. PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASE:

The number of notifications of infectious disease received during the year was phenomenally low; as one case of whooping cough was notified in the third quarter and one ophthalmia neonatorum notification was received in the final quarter. This freedom from infectious disease seemed so unusual that contact was made with the medical practitioners on a number of occasions, who confirmed that the District was free from notifiable disease. This was also confirmed by the absence of any such notifications from the Head Teachers of the Schools.

The experience of this year is exceptional and is unlikely to be sustained, as it is probably due to a number of factors operating simultaneously.

#### Diphtheria Immunisation:

The District was free from diphtheria throughout the year and there were no deaths attributed to this disease.

Efforts to secure the complete protection of the child population by prophylactic injections were maintained. The contribution made by the medical practitioners in the area to this work is very considerable.



The population under fifteen years of age was estimated as 724, of this number, 274 were estimated to be under five years of age. At the end of the year, the proportion of children under five years of age who had received prophylactic injections was 19.6% and the corresponding figure for the 5 - 15 years group was 81.5%. If these are taken together, 78% of all persons under 15 years of age had received prophylactic injections

The actual number of children given prophylactic treatment during the year was 39, of this number all with the exception of one child, were under five years of age. There were no reinforcing injections given and no Schick testing was carried out.

The weakness of the present stage lies in the fact that all children have not been given treatment and that a large proportion of these are under five years of age. It must be remembered that diphtheria has a high fatality rate amongst young children.

There appears to be no demand for reinforcing doses of diphtheria prophylactic. These consist of a single injection of T.A.F. as this material can be injected with very little risk of unpleasant results. It is possible that the advantage of reinforcing doses given at the age of five years and eleven years of age will be appreciated if more information is made available to parents.

Number of Children who had completed full course of Immunisation during year 1946.

Age at 31.12.46. i.e. Born in Year	Under 1 1946	1 1945	2 1944	3 1943	4 1942	5 - 9 1937-41	10 - 14 1932-36	Total Under 15
Number Immunised	3	23	26	45	43	210	216	566
Estimated mid-year Population 1946	274					450		724

No post Schick Testing was carried out as this is not possible under present conditions.

#### Tuberculosis:

At the end of 1945 there were 34 cases of tuberculosis on the register, 31 pulmonary and 3 non-pulmonary. During 1946, 9 cases were added to the register, all pulmonary, of these 6 were with respect to new cases. Eleven cases were removed from the register, all pulmonary, and on the 31st. December 1946, 32 cases remained on the register, 29 pulmonary and 3 non-pulmonary. Seven deaths were attributed to pulmonary tuberculosis.

Age Periods.	NEW CASES.				DEATHS.			
	Respiratory.		Non-respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15+	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
25+	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
35+	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
45+	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	-
55+	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
65+	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

#### Scabies:

Only one case of scabies was brought to the notice of the Department during the year. There can be no doubt that the incidence of scabies is much diminished from that prevalent during the war years. This change would appear to be due very much to the decrease in movement of the population.



## CAUSES OF DEATHS DURING YEAR 1946.

No.	Cause,	Male.	Female.	Total.
6	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	3	4	7
8	Syphilitic Diseases	1	-	1
9	Influenza	1	1	2
13	Cancer of Buccal Cavity and Uterus	-	1	1
14	Cancer of Stomach or Duodenum	-	1	1
16	Cancer of all other Sites	2	2	4
18	Intracranial Vascular Lesions	4	4	8
19	Heart Disease	3	10	13
20	Other Diseases of Circulatory System	1	-	1
21	Bronchitis	-	2	2
22	Pneumonia	2	-	2
26	Apendicitis	1	-	1
27	Other Digestive Diseases	-	2	2
28	Nephritis	-	1	1
31	Premature Birth	2	-	2
32	Congenital Malformations, Birth. Injury, Etc.	1	1	2
35	Violent Causes	1	-	1
36	All Other Causes	3	3	6
All Causes		25	32	57







